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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 007225

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL IZ SY JO

SUBJECT: JORDANIAN READOUT ON DAMASCUS FOREIGN MINISTER

MEETING: MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Classified By: Ambassador Edward W. Gnehm for Reasons 1.5 (B,D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Jordanian Foreign Minister Marwan Muasher described the foreign ministerial in Damascus in Iraq as unimportant, and faulted Iraqi Foreign Minister Zebari's rejection of an 11th hour invitation as a mistake. Muasher said that Zebari would be included in all such future meetings. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Following a series of weekend phone calls with Jordanian FM Muasher, who was seeking our assistance in convincing Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari to come to Syria, the Ambassador met November 3 with Muasher to obtain a readout on the Damascus meeting of foreign ministers on Iraq. Muasher replied that while it was clear that the Syrians did not want Zebari to participate in all the proceedings, all other countries in attendance supported (though to varying degrees) full inclusion of the Iraqi throughout the entire event. Although Zebari's invitation had not been "properly handled," Muasher said that Zebari had made a big mistake in not attending. Specifically, Muasher stated that because the foreign ministers had taken an "extra step" by postponing the start of the meeting to allow Zebari time to arrive, his refusal to come "left a bitter taste in some mouths."

¶3. (C) When asked what had been the real purpose of convening the gathering, Muasher smiled and said it was simply a chance for the Syrians to "promote themselves." Regarding the meeting's outcome, Muasher offered that "there isn't much to say," noting that the ministerial communiqu was quite "mild" and that some important subjects, most notably the deployment of Turkish and/or Arab troops to Iraq, had not even been discussed. The real benefit of the meeting, Muasher concluded, was that it established a firm precedent for the inclusion of the Iraqi Foreign Minister in all such future events.

¶4. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.

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